

SUPPLEMENT TO THE ACADEMY

NOVEMBER 26, 1910

CHILDREN'S DRAMA

THOSE who were fortunate enough to see "As You Like It" performed by children at the Whitechapel Art Gallery the other day, will doubtless agree that the title of this article calls for no apology; and, indeed, at a season of the year when children invade both the stage and the auditorium of many theatres in unwonted numbers, it would be at least topical to speculate as to the philosophy of pantomime and the artistic merits and defects of child actors and actresses. But while juvenile mimicry of adult conceptions of drama is entertaining enough, it is more to our purpose to consider the dramatic spirit as it is actually present in children themselves. Pantomimes certainly do not reflect this spirit, and, in spite of the sentimental, but hardly more childish influence of fairy-plays, are still aimed exclusively at adult audiences who grant themselves no other opportunity of appreciating the humours of the music-halls. Probably the ideal children's play would have the colour of pantomime, the atmosphere of "Peter Pan," the poetry of the "Blue Bird," and, most important of all, a downright melodramatic plot. It is this last that is invariably lacking in entertainments nominally provided for children; it is the first consideration in the entertainments they provide for themselves.

If grown-up people were in the habit, which unfortunately they are not, of meeting together in moments of relaxation and acting little extemporary plays, these plays would surely give a first-hand indication of the dramatic situations that interested them. Yet this is what children are always doing, and in terms of play every little boy is a dashing and manly actor and every little girl a beautiful and accomplished actress. From the first glad hour when little brother cries to little sister, "You be Red Riding Hood and I'll be the wolf and eat you!" the dramatic aspect of life is never absent from the mind of imaginative youth.

In one respect, at all events, these play-dramas of children should meet with the approval of modern dramatic critics. No one can accuse them of losing sight of the motive of their drama in elaboration of scenery or stage effects. A chair will serve for a beleaguered castle, a pirate ship, or Cinderella's coach in turn, and the costumes imitate this Elizabethan simplicity. Nevertheless, it cannot be said that their stage is entirely free from the tyranny of those pernicious conventions that place obstacles in the way of art. The law of primogeniture, always rigidly enforced in nurseries, as Mr. Kenneth Graham has observed, makes the eldest brother as much of a nuisance as the actor-manager. According to his nature, and the character of the play, he always insists on being either hero or villain, and in the absence of limelight contrives to give himself an exaggerated share both of the action and of the dialogue. Sisters are placid creatures and do not very much mind whether they have anything to do or not as long as they can all be princesses, but it is hard on a younger brother to be compelled to walk the plank, although he has the heart of a pirate chief. And the fact that whatever part he may play, the eldest brother must triumph at the end of the last act, tends to stereotype the lines along which the drama develops.

As for the plays themselves, it must be owned that they cover an extraordinary extent of ground, and display a

variety that no other repertory theatre can hope to equal. The present writer has seen five children in one afternoon give spirited performances of Aladdin, David and Goliath, an unnamed drama of pirates, and the famous comedy of teacher and naughty pupils. This last is the standard performance of elementary school-girls all over London, and to the discerning critic displays just those faults of sophistication and over-elaboration to which long runs at our theatres have made us accustomed. The teacher is always too monotonously ill-tempered, the pupils are ill-behaved beyond all discretion; Ibsen, one feels, would have expressed this eternal warfare between youth and authority in subtler terms. Sometimes, however, London children achieve a really startling realism in their games; and the looker-on may derive a considerable knowledge of the mothers from watching the children perform in some such drama of life as the ever-popular "Shopping on Saturday Night." It may be noted here that children's rhapsodies over dolls and kittens, or, indeed, over anything, are always clever pieces of character-acting. Naturally, children do not rhapsodise, but they soon learn the secret of the art from observation of their elders.

But though in large towns the poorer children may not have escaped the spirit of the age, so that their art hardly raises them from the grey levels of their lives, children in general are eager to find the artistic symbol for their dreams, and allow realism but an accidental share in the expression of their romantic ideals. They do not seek the materials for their dramas in the little comedies and tragedies of nursery or schoolroom life; they prefer to forget that ordinary everyday happenings have ever wooed them to tributary laughter or tears, and fulfil their destiny as pirates or highwaymen, fairies or forlorn princesses.

Probably the nearest approach to children's drama that we have on the modern stage is the so-called cloak-and-sword drama. Children's plays are full of action; speeches are short and emphatic, and attempts at character acting are desultory and provocative of laughter in the other members of the company. The fights are always carried out with spirit and enthusiasm. To have seen Captain Shark, that incarnadined pirate, wiping his sword on his pinafore, is to have realised that beauty of violence for which Mr. Chesterton pleads so eloquently in the "Napoleon of Notting Hill."

Bearing in mind the nature of the dramas that children play to please themselves, it should be possible to lay down certain rules as to the composition of plays for their entertainment. Working by light of Stevenson's lantern, Mr. Barrie has done good work in "Peter Pan," but he has made tremendous mistakes. The scene on the pirate ship is perfect, a model of what such a scene should be with plenty of fighting and no burdensome excess of talk. But in a play that is essentially a boy's play, Wendy is a mistake. There was no Wendy on Stevenson's island of treasure, and her continual intrusion into the story would not be tolerated in any nursery. In real life she would either have had to discard her sex and become a member of the band, or else have adopted the honorary rôle of princess and stayed tactfully in the background. The Pirate Chief is very good; so good, in fact, that it looks very like an eldest brother's part, in which case he would have beaten Peter and made him walk the plank. The

end, though pleasing to adult minds, is impossible from a childish point of view. The boys would never have left their fun of their own free will. The gong ought to have sounded for tea, or perhaps, Mr. Darling could have returned from the City with some mysterious parcels for the children to open. That is how things really happen. To our mind, as we have said above, the greatest fault a play for children can have, is the lack of a straightforward plot that allows of plenty of stirring and adventurous action. Children love stories, whether they be make-up stories of their own or real stories told them by someone else. The hero of the play should be the biggest boy acting it; the female characters should have no greater share of the action than the most rudimentary sense of politeness would allow them, but they may sit in the background, mute but beautiful princesses, as much as they like, and they are permitted to comment on the courage of the hero when occasion offers. Successful scenes should be repeated three or four times till their possibilities had been exhausted. Every now and then, if realism is desired, nurse or governess should look through the door and say: "Children, don't be rough," to which the whole company must reply: "We're only playing!" Once at least in the course of the play one of the smaller members of the company should be smitten into tears, to be comforted by the princesses. The actors should quarrel freely among themselves and throw up their parts every half-hour, but, on the whole, they should all enjoy themselves enormously.

Such an entertainment, we admit, would be intolerable to the sentimental adult; but the criticisms of the children in the audience would be worth hearing.

REVIEWS

A HANDSOME GIFT BOOK

Poems. By CHRISTINA ROSSETTI. Illustrated by Florence Harrison. (Blackie and Son. 15s. net.)

It was inevitable that before long the poems of Christina Rossetti should be chosen as a fit subject for the inspiration of an artist, for in many respects their quality is exceedingly pictorial. Hardly a page of her work, whether we take the exquisite dreaminess of her shorter lyrics or the lively running melody of "Goblin Market," but lends itself to half-a-dozen methods of illustration. To this finely composed selection of her best poems, Mrs. Alice Meynell contributes an introduction, in which admiration is not allowed to overwhelm judicious criticism. "Christina Rossetti would have been a poet even if Dante Gabriel Rossetti had not written," observes Mrs. Meynell. "Her poetry is, in a word, true poetry, as gold-leaf is gold; and sometimes her poems are, as it were, a mere film of poetry. This is true of the least admirable. In the best the unmistakable genius is not only present, but important—even great."

We have here more concern with the artist, however, than with the poet, and, on the whole, she has done her difficult work in a capable and sometimes charming manner. The black-and-white design facing page 8, "O Laura, come," is very beautifully conceived; so is the coloured illustration of the "Goblin Merchantmen" with its lovely, delicate sweep of a hill's curve in the distance, and the fantastic figures laden with fruit in the foreground. "You should have wept her yesterday," an incident in "The Prince's Progress," also appeals to us; the rich illumination from the stained-glass window is very happily conveyed. We cannot select for mention nearly all the designs which gave us pleasure; they form the majority: but there are three or four poor ones among them. In the black-and-white drawing entitled "Through the Dark my Silence spoke like Thunder," the hands of the kneeling

figure are not pleasant, and there is a rather alarming suggestion of an electric switchboard about the closed case-ment; the same incongruous idea comes in another design facing page 42; and in "Eve" (page 194) the head looks as though it were detached from the body, while the foot seems to us out of proportion. We merely indicate these, however, as exceptions in a total of undeniable excellence; subtracting them, we still have a remainder of fine artistic work which shows a true appreciation by the artist of the spirit of the poet.

THE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

The Gospel according to St. Luke. (Mowbray. 1s. 6d. net.)

The Earthly Life of Our Lord. By the Rev. B. W. RANDOLPH, D.D. (Mowbray. 1s. net.)

The Playmate. A Christmas Mystery. By MADEL DEARMER. (Mowbray. 1s. net.)

No notice of Christmas books would be complete without some mention of those which deal expressly with the Festival commemorated at this period of the year. The editor, in his note to the present edition of "The Gospel According to St. Luke," is of opinion that "the books of the Bible are . . . less easy to read than other books, because their arrangement lacks the clearness and attractiveness which in other books we expect and obtain." We cannot say that we in any way agree with this statement. Surely if the Bible is what it is claimed to be, namely, the Word of God, it is meet and right that it should differ from all other books, especially when the difference results, as it most assuredly does, in a beauty of language surpassed by none and equalled only by the writings of Shakespeare. We do not think that any confusion—if such there be—will be lessened by placing the recorded sayings of the different characters between quotation marks; neither does it appear that any "hindrance" is removed by the arrangement of the book into fourteen chapters instead of the usual twenty-four. Nothing but praise, however, can be given for the illustrations which are plentifully distributed throughout the volume. They are one and all reproductions of such famous artists as Rembrandt, Millais, Paola Veronese, Titian, Rubens, Holman Hunt, etc., and serve far better to bring the Sacred Story to the knowledge of those whom it is the aim of the present editor to reach than any number of inverted commas with the addition of italics for quotations.

"THE EARTHLY LIFE OF OUR LORD."

Canon Randolph here presents to us in book form an illustrated edition of a pamphlet which previously appeared in No. 27 of the "Churchman's Penny Library." The book is divided into nine chapters, five of which are devoted to Christ's ministry, which is calculated as extending "for some period above three years," in accordance with the plan followed by Dr. Pusey. There are many illustrations, and the print is large and clear.

"THE PLAYMATE."

From the author of "Gervase" we now receive a dainty little volume in gold and white, which has for its subtitle "A Christmas Mystery," and which is dedicated to Her Highness Princess Marie Louise of Schleswig-Holstein. A crippled child and his mother carry on a conversation in dialogue form, and later on the Christ Child, in the person of the Playmate, holds communion with the little cripple. The story ends amidst a peal of Christmas bells, and as both mother and child declare themselves to be perfectly happy, we suppose that such a material fact as "there is no food in the cupboard"—which statement is made just before the declaration of happiness—is not worthy of the attention of the happy pair.

Parent and Child; a Treatise on the Moral and Religious Education of Children. By SIR OLIVER LODGE, D.Sc., F.R.S. (Funk and Wagnalls Co. 2s. net.)

Amid the flood of literature for children, it is pleasant to find a little book for parents floating on the stream—almost, we fear, overwhelmed. The name of Sir Oliver Lodge on the cover, however, is enough to make the discriminating reader rescue it from the oblivion to which most of these volumes seem doomed, and give it, if possible, a more enduring fame. In familiar language, the great scientist has set some pearls of good advice with regard to the treatment and training of children, and if some of the pearls have not much lustre, others are of the finest quality—and all are genuine. We like exceedingly Sir Oliver's point of view. He emphasises, for instance, the evil of over-correcting a child when in its charming irresponsible babblings it constructs its own grammar and composes its sentences on the easiest plan. "If small twins," he says, "having a joint birthday, are asked whose birthday it is; and if, after looking at each other for a moment, they simultaneously respond 'we's,' anyone who would attempt to correct the statement into accordance with the rules of English grammar would be guilty of a minor kind of blasphemy." This is perfectly true; half the charm of babyhood lies in the linguistic surprises which are *en règle* in that happy state. Coming to later years, when the child is at school, the author indicates the necessity that a certain amount of training should be given in such apparently simple matters as the composition of a telegram—a neat point, for the art of condensation is by no means simple, and few persons are expert in it. The little book is quite a worthy study of childhood's urgent needs, from a thoroughly practical point of view.

A STORY-TELLER FOR BOYS

George Alfred Henty: The Story of an Active Life. By G. MANVILLE FENN. (Blackie. 3s. 6d. net.)

Few of us who in the past have read—and what boy has not?—Henty's thrilling yarns, can have had at the time the knowledge that the actual life of our charmer was quite as adventurous and fascinating as his fiction. Mr. Manville Fenn, himself a veteran boys' story-teller of distinction, has well sub-titled this account of his friend's wonderful career, "*The Story of an Active Life.*" Active! "Active" is hardly a word sufficiently strong and vivid. Henty is shown to have been at all times extraordinarily keen and strenuous about the work upon which he happened to be engaged at the moment. So delicate in early youth that he was regarded as likely to be a permanent invalid if he succeeded in passing safely through the critical years before manhood, he quickly developed a few years later into an accomplished all-round athlete. Cricket, football, boxing, rowing, whatever sport he took up, he proved himself above the average. Boxing was a favourite pastime with him, and originated during his Westminster school days in the laudable desire to beat a big bully who had taken advantage of his then weakness to give him a thrashing. Henty accordingly took lessons from a well-known ex-pugilist, who was an excellent teacher, and soon turned the tables on his temporary victor. Mr. Manville Fenn, we notice by the way, makes a remark to the effect that in those days the art of boxing and its practice in life were not considered in any way rowdy or disgraceful; but, on the contrary, manly and fashionable. We sincerely hope that his statement only holds true of the weaklings among the parents and children of the present day. No more useful, more manly, more muscle- and temper-improving accomplishment can be found. Boxing is the only natural means by which there may be physical equality between two antagonists, otherwise most unequally matched.

Henty certainly discovered his boxing prowess to be of the utmost value in many critical situations in which

he found himself, both at home and abroad, when dealing with a crowd of unruly or hostile men. In the Abyssinian Expedition, on his return journey, after fulfilling the duties of special correspondent, it saved his life and those of his companions when they were suddenly attacked by a band of robbers. He simply knocked one of them down with his fist, and the rest were so overawed that they made off without any delay. Henty was indeed quite a fearless man, and most determined also—in fact a born fighter, as a glance at his different portraits at once reveals. His natural power of command was altogether extraordinary, and many are the instances given in this volume of this special faculty. All difficult posts, those where great energy and resource and capacity for organisation and control were particularly needed, seemed to fall to him, as to the man born therefor.

On leaving Westminster, our author went to Cambridge, where he studied so hard that after a short residence he became seriously ill, and had to adopt for some time a less exhausting mode of life. Soon after began the Crimean War. With it came his chance. How could a man of his vigorous temperament sit down quietly to study and pore over books whilst his country was engaged in a momentous war? He quickly decided to throw over book-learning and join in the fray, where life and death were at stake. By great good fortune he obtained an official appointment, though unfortunately, as he thought, not in the fighting ranks. However, he had ample experiences of the war, was under fire, was a wrathful witness of the misery of our troops, and wrote letters home of terse, vivid description. The final result was the publication of some of his material as the work of a special correspondent to one of the big dailies; and so began this life-work of his, in the course of which he acquired that marvellous depth and breadth of knowledge of men and things, which is displayed throughout his boys' books. It might be affirmed that, almost literally, his stories are true, because the incidents are based upon his personal experience and knowledge.

After the Crimean War, towards the end of which Henty was invalided home, he did excellent service for many years as special correspondent. He was present in the Dahomey and Abyssinian campaigns, in the former of which he went through a very dangerous sailing adventure with H. M. Stanley, his fellow-correspondent; was in Paris during the Commune, when he narrowly escaped death more than once; was with the Garibaldians in Italy; and acted in the same capacity apart from war. Most interesting details of all these experiences of Henty's are given in the present book, largely in his own words. He was an authority on mines and their working, and visited them in whatever part of the world he happened to be. He was also—though this point need hardly be mentioned, as it is obvious from his fascinating stories—an admirable descriptive writer, graphic, brief, giving a vivid picture in the fewest of words.

Henty at first merely regarded the writing of boys' stories as a hobby of which he was particularly fond. Then, naturally, when his hobby proved to be a big financial success, he made it his chief employment in life, when a serious illness and the advance of years had perforce driven him from the more congenial duty of recording travel and adventure. In harness to the last, he was writing and correcting the proofs of his last tale a short time before he was rather suddenly taken mortally ill. The delicate, invalid boy had lived to be well over the allotted age, and to be remarkable among the best endowed of his fellows, both for physical and mental strength. What a fine, splendid, well-lived life! What a fine, splendid man! A man to his finger-tips. With his powers, Henty was not the one to abuse them. By common consent he was one of the gentlest, kindest, most affectionate of men. But (and this is a striking, unexpected fact) he was one of the worst correspondents, domestically, that ever lived! He always referred his anxious relations and friends to his published work!

Our Roll of Honour. (Biographical Sketches for Young People.) By J. VEREKER. (Skeffington and Son. 3s. 6d. net.)

All boys and girls of spirit ought to read this book. In simple language Mr. Vereker has told the life-stories of fifteen great men and women, choosing impartially from scientists and poets, authors and philanthropists, and he has written in exactly the style that will hold the attention of young folk at the restless age. Some of his remarks—his asides, as it were—are quite acute and very true; for example, in impressing his readers with the duty of keeping their eyes open as they go through life, he says: "If you look at a cat, pretending you have never before seen or heard of one, you will marvel at its interest-ness. The same with all things as with cats." And in concluding his chapter on Henry Purcell, he remarks: "We are waiting for a British artist who will find something fresh to say in music. Perhaps one day the world may be delighted by an English school of music equal in grandeur to the German school." Mr. Vereker need not have enlarged quite so much on the anatomical labours of William Harvey, the celebrated physician, in a book for the juveniles; but that is the only objection we have to make. The stories of Milton, of Nathaniel Hawthorne, and of Florence Nightingale are exceptionally interesting, and we can fully recommend the attractively bound volume to all who are seeking a gift for the coming season.

Chemistry for Beginners. By TUDOR JENKS. Illustrated. (W. and R. Chambers. 3s. 6d.)

THERE is always room at Christmas-time for chatty volumes suitable for young folks, as unlike school books as possible: and it is best for them to be well illustrated and in big type. Mr. Jenks has compiled a book which answers this description. It takes its place in *Chambers's "Wonder Books,"* which are being brought out on both sides of the Atlantic. For this series he has already contributed volumes on electricity and photography. We should like to have seen more English pictures, to say nothing of Madame Curie and modern living discoverers. But illustrations of dinner two-and-a-half miles underground, the diamond-making furnace, and similar subjects are quite interesting. The style is homely, and big subjects are touched upon lightly and sincerely by one who apparently does not claim to know very much about them, but who, nevertheless, has considerable facility in writing for the humbler type of general reader. In this way the book is likely to have a useful circulation in its series. As a serious introduction to the study of chemistry by beginners there are better books available.

THE HIGH ADVENTURE

Here and There: An Album of Adventures. By ASCOTT R. HOPE. (Black. 5s.)

Sea Yarns. By JOHN ARTHUR BARRY. (W. and R. Chambers. 3s. 6d.)

The Two of Them Together. By the Rev. ARTHUR SHEARLY CRIPPS. (Mowbray. 2s. 6d. net.)

HERE are three books meant for boys' reading, and dealing in different ways with very different matters. Mr. Hope's volume is a miscellany of adventures, some of which happened in England, some on the Alps, some in far countries. "Sea Yarns" is described by its title; and Mr.

Cripps's book tells of the enterprise of an English boy, who, with certain black companions, makes himself the master of a great store of Portuguese gold, guarded by venomous serpents.

Each book, as we have said, treads its own ground in its own way. Mr. Hope narrates with accustomed skill the trials of the West-country schoolboys, who get caught in an Exmoor blizzard. "Sea Yarns" discourses of diving for treasure in wrecked ships, of Chinese pirates, of vessels manned by dead crews. The scenes of "The Two of Them Together" are in the wilds of South Africa. Mr. Hope is sophisticated; Mr. Cripps and Mr. Barry tell their good stories with a certain naive simplicity and directness which are in their way very attractive. But in all three books there is the one mark which links them together, which is not without a certain psychological interest. This common note may be defined as the joy of pain, danger, terror, and discomfort, and if one considers the matter, it seems somewhat remarkable that there is an undoubted attraction to humanity in circumstances which rise from the merely disagreeable to peril of sudden death.

Let us remember, in the first place, that these books are all written for boys; and that the nature of boys—as of all children—is the best example we can obtain of the primitive nature of man. A school is a microcosm of savage humanity; its vices and its virtues are natural things. That which is dear to the heart of a boy is dear to the heart of the natural man. So we get to the singular conclusion that in the nature of mankind there is something that impels us to seek, not our advantage, but our disadvantage; or at least that which seems to be our disadvantage according to all "rational" precepts. Of course, there is a kind of scale to be observed here as in other matters of humanity. In all the arts this may be noted; we ascend from the child's scrawl, from Traddles's skeletons up to Botticelli, Velasquez, Turner; from the crudest verse of the smallest poet to the miracles of Shakespeare and the great masters; from a twopenny tune to the sovereign majesty of Bach. It is the same in morals; you may feel "rather cross," or you may commit murder.

So with the subject matter of these adventurous books: the pleasure of the unpleasant. It ranges, as we have noted, from an affair of chilly toes and empty stomachs up to the danger of death; and it is quite a curious phenomenon. It is manifested in things very great and in things very small. Take the flaming heat of an afternoon in July; nature, one would say, urges the delight of a hammock in the shade, with the accompaniment of cooling drinks, and the final satisfaction of a nap. But grace—or whatever we like to call it—drives two men into the tennis-lawn, where they rush to and fro and find a huge delight in violent exertions. And, at the top of the scale, the flaming heat of the burning faggots about the stake has, we are certain, been an allurements to the souls of the martyrs. In other words, the heart of life is governed by a supreme paradox; in the last issue the parallel straight lines meet and become one. Ultimately, the moth is for the flame.

It is probable that the non-recognition of this vital, fundamental, and necessary truth of human nature is one of the principal causes of that piteous mass of confusion, error, and fatuity that is generally alluded to as "modern thought." Briefly expressed, the error of modern thought may be said to lie in insisting that the exile from fairyland is in reality a bacon-pig. It is true that in consequence of an ancient misfortune, the exile—who is man—has contracted certain porcine habits; he is, therefore, persuaded, in many cases readily enough, that what he wants is a warm sty and plenty of wash and his piggish way in all things. Hence Liberalism and Socialism; in other words, the doctrine of physical comfort as the supreme good—the Gospel of Wash! It ought to be true (in the so-called natural order); it seems convincing; the other doctrine appears to be nonsense, and mad nonsense—and yet we know that American millionaires are not really the most blessed of men; more, that in most instances

they are not far from being the most miserable of men; they cannot even relish the wash for which they have worked. We know this, and yet we shut our eyes to plain facts, and go on insisting that if men were only comfortable they would be perfectly happy. We are quite sure that man can live by bread alone; we shall go on in that faith till the great catastrophe which will make us forget that there ever was a French Revolution. That distinguished Liberal, Mr. Masterman, has pointed out this huge and fatal error; he shows a whole society, from the smartest of the smart set to the poorest labourer, entirely convinced that the aim of life is bread and circuses—stark material good.

To take another aspect of this strange matter: the case is curious, not only because man is thus deluded and—we may say—mad; but also and chiefly because he has the power to go mad. One cannot imagine a pig suddenly seized with the delusion that he is in reality a nightingale, that he is meant to perch upon a slender bough in the dusky brake and pour forth the incantation of a magic song. And who, on the other hand, can conceive of a bird of paradise which is sure that it would make capital bacon? But this is one of the great "differences" of man, that he is capable of entertaining and believing in illusions very whit as wild. Though his stomach aches with crumpets, he eats still more crumpets; he is so deadly certain that "crumpets is wholesome." And he will, probably, come to an awful end, similar to that of the obstinate old gentleman in the apologue of Mr. Sam Weller. Thus, though our country aches and groans and shrieks with its three-century-old diet of Liberal crumpets, it goes on swallowing greater and greater doses of that poisonous food; it has become like a dipsomaniac, who, shuddering from the effects of last night's debauch, uncorks a fresh bottle of whisky when he wakes. Thus we heal, or think we heal, the woes of Liberalism with fresh batches of "Liberal legislation."

It will probably be quite unavailing; still it may be well to raise a protest, to proclaim the real truth that man does not live by physical comfort, but by Romance—a word which ascends the ladder from such simple tales as those before us to the highest mysteries of the faith. We must have our *panem quotidianum*, it is true; the poet must have pen, ink, and paper, or his music would die in the hour of birth. So must the painter have his canvas and his pigments; without these his vision of form and colour cannot be realised. But pens, ink, canvases, and pigments: these are the material accidents of poetry and painting; the life of each art is a quickening spirit.

So with man. Bread he must have; but on bread alone he cannot live. He must in the first place have that which we have indicated under the shorthand title of Romance; he must abandon the cosy shelters of materialism and venture forth into enchanted forests and on perilous seas, he must set forth for Cor-arbennic, the Sovereign and Perpetual Quire of the Graal.

For the odd thing is, that if a man has not something of Galahad in him, if he has no desire at all for the Supernal Cup, he will have no relish for the Inferior Cup, whether it contain the finest claret or merely four-ale.

BOOKS FOR BOYS AND GIRLS

THE recurrent problem embodied in the question, "What shall we do with our boys?" is in abeyance as the Christmas season approaches, and the puzzle is generally expressed in another query—"What shall we give them?" The days of toys are past; not every boy cares for model locomotives; but, at some period or another, most youngsters can be captivated by a book. It must be a book of the right sort nowadays; a shout of scornful laughter would greet one of the ultra-moral stories of the sixties and seventies, were we to attempt such a risky gift; the boy of 1910 is, as far as his reading is concerned, leagues

removed from his prototype of 1880, or even 1890. Fortunately, authors have arisen who realise this important fact and its bearings, and publishers have seen to it that the modern boy shall be provided with his fare served in an attractive way. We all agree that tea from dainty Japanese cups is much more fragrant and enjoyable than tea sipped from the thick bowls of unbreakable pottery known as "china" in certain lowly circles; why, then, should not our appreciation of mental refreshment be enhanced by the method of its presentation? So, at least, the providers of our literature seem to have reasoned, and we may be duly grateful.

Not so very long ago, Ballantyne and Jules Verne and Kingston formed the staple fare of all rightly conditioned boys. Those good men have passed from us, but a host has arisen to take their places. Captain F. S. Brereton is becoming a tried favourite, and his new story, "A Gallant Grenadier" (Blackie and Son, 3s. 6d.), well maintains his fame. Phil Western, the hero, is a fine, high-spirited character; from the first he is up to all kinds of pranks—quite harmless, but certainly awkward for those responsible for his behaviour. At school he tars and feathers two statues belonging to an irascible old gentleman, and the result can be imagined. An office life does not suit him, so, after a short time as assistant to a menagerie, he enlists. His adventures as a soldier—he is twice imprisoned, and goes through the Crimean campaign—form the principal part of this capital story, and in telling them Captain Brereton has scored one more decided success.

Mr. Walter de la Mare writes in "The Three Mulla-Mulgars" (Duckworth and Co., 5s. net) a story of wild life in tropical forests, very romantic and very poetic, in spite of the heroes being members of the monkey tribe. The result is not quite so convincing as Mr. Kipling's work on similar lines, but it is distinctly entertaining, and a decidedly pretty vein of fancy runs through the pages. It is just the thing for reading aloud to a child of a dreamy temperament; there are plenty of such children left, even in these practical times, and we can prophesy that the grown-up people who are familiar with Mr. De la Mare's work in other fields will not be disappointed if they pick up this book on the sly, and spend an hour in its company.

We must confess to having become extremely interested in "We and the World," by Juliana H. Ewing (G. Bell and Sons, 2s. 6d. net). The only fault we have to find with it is that lengthy disquisitions, such as that on page 47 beginning "The cares of this life are not as a rule improving to the countenance," and the dissertation on cruelty at page 101, which takes up two whole pages, seem rather out of place. Apart from this, the story is precisely what any boy of sense will term "ripping." Jack and Jem, two brothers, have various experiences at school which are quite exciting, but these are mild compared with the adventures which befall Jack—who tells the story—when he stows away on board a steamer at Liverpool. The description of the voyages are excellent, and the boy who does not feel a thrill of sympathy with his comrades of this tale is not worthy the name.

Two books, at the price of half-a-crown, come from the S.P.C.K., and are wonderful value for so modest a sum—"Ocean Chums," by W. C. Metcalfe, and "Jenkyn Clyffe, Bedesman," by Gertrude Hollis. The former is an exciting story of sea adventures, with which is interwoven a more conventional romance of a will; and, as the hero finishes his career with a draft for £5,000, all ends happily. The second one is a story of the olden days when minstrels and archers and "varlets" were abroad in the land; it is not every writer who can create a vivid sensation of reality when dealing with so distant a period, but the author here succeeds admirably. "Brothers Five" (2s.) from the same publishers, and "The Deputy Boss," a tale of British Honduras (1s. 6d.), should have a good sale, both being full of adventures; one deals with wars of the sixteenth century, in which Spain played a large part: the other is concerned with the battle with tropical nature.

"The Red Knight," by G. I. Whithan (Blackie, 2s. 6d.), introduces the Black Prince, and is on the side of chivalry; a mystery runs through the story, and the interest is well sustained. Other excellent boys' books, issued at 3s. 6d. by the same firm, are "Hawkwood the Brave," by William Beck, which deals with the stirring times of the "White Company" in a thoroughly judicious and praiseworthy manner; "Overdue," by Harry Collingwood, in which we encounter, for the first time this season, some very realistic pirates; two re-issues of "Maori and Settler" and "St. Bartholomew's Eve," by G. A. Henty, capably illustrated; and "Ronald Bannerman's Boyhood," a new edition of George MacDonald's finest book for boys. At 3s. we have "The Boys at Menhardoc," one of G. Manville Fenn's tried favourites; at 2s. 6d. a setting of the legends of "Finn and his Warrior Band," by Donald Mackenzie, suitable for boys or girls; and "Two Dover Boys," by Gertrude Hollis, a capital yarn of Henry VIII.'s days; at 1s. 6d. one of David Ker's best romances, "Blown Away from the Land."

From Messrs. John Ouseley, Ltd., comes a good school-story, entitled "In Carrington's Duty-Week" (2s. 6d.), told very naturally and in parts very amusingly. "That engine is transient" was an example constructed by one of the boys who had to illustrate the dictionary meaning of the word—"transient": "passing quickly."

In most ungallant fashion we have left the girls to the last; but it seems that the publishers think more of boys, if we may judge by the number of boys' books to hand. However, "A Countess from Canada," by Bessie Marchant, promises well (Blackie, 5s.). It relates the trials of a cheerful and courageous girl in the wintry backwoods, but there is plenty of humour, and we need hardly praise the style of the author at this time of day. Another volume at a lower price (3s. 6d.) comes from the same practised hand, "Greta's Domain," and few girls but will enjoy this exciting tale. "The House of the Five Poplars," by Lucy Crump (Blackie, 2s.), is more particularly intended for smaller girls, but it is written in a very charming manner, and the exploits of the three children-heroes are sure to make a wide appeal. In "Andrew Garnett's Will," by Edith E. Cowper (S.P.C.K., 2s.), we have a gentle little story with a religious trend, which, however, is by no means emphasized objectionably.

There remain a few volumes which it is difficult to define either as "boys'" or "girls'" books. Three of these come from Messrs. Duckworth and Co., and the first, "The Book of Betty Barker," by Maggie Browne (3s. 6d.), is illustrated by Mr. Arthur Rackham. His fantasies of line and genial distortions of animal life are peculiarly fascinating, and very suitable to the text, which is quite in the vein of "Lewis Carroll." "Betty Barber" is one of the best children's books we have seen for a very long time; it is clever, but not laboriously so, and witty without any sacrifice of ease. By the same author is "Wanted: A King," and she is again fortunate in her artist-collaborator, for Mr. Harry Furniss supplies some characteristic and humorous designs. It is a book which should be read aloud to a small child; the result will be, without doubt, a rapt attention and demands for more. "Gervas and the Magic Castle," by B. V. Harvey (1s. 6d.) is illustrated by Harry Rountree, and will suit the child who loves fairy tales.

"Lives of the Fur Folk," by M. D. Haviland (Longmans, Green and Co., 5s. net), is a most interesting study of field and forest life, its characters being the "fur folk" themselves. It conveys a large amount of useful information in a manner not too obvious. With "A Royal Story-Book" (Digby, Long and Co., 3s. 6d. net), by the Queen of Roumania ("Carmen Sylva")—a delightful selection of stories and legends peculiar to the country—we conclude our present glance at the fare provided for the young people. They have no reason to complain at the feast, for there is something to suit the most diverse tastes, and never before were they catered for so admirably.

The Swiss Family Robinson. With Illustrations in Colour and in Black and White. By CHARLES FOLKARD. (Dent. 5s. net.)

A Middy of the Slave Squadron: A West African Story. By HARRY COLLINGWOOD. Illustrated by W. Rainey, R.I. (Blackie. 5s.)

The Great Aeroplane: A Thrilling Tale of Adventure. By CAPTAIN F. S. BRERETON. Illustrated by Edward S. Hodgson. (Blackie. 6s.)

THERE is a certain class of literature, known generally as boys' books, which draws its circle of readers from among people far removed from boyhood, even if they have ever passed through that stage. It is curious how great an attraction these books, as a rule, have over the sisters of those for whom the volumes are primarily intended. The books written for girls are for the most part, or have been until quite recently, of so namby-pamby a description that one can forgive any normal, healthy-minded girl for throwing them aside and appropriating the literature of her brother as a substitute. Thus, boys' books cater for the young of both sexes. But it is not to the young only that these books, when they tell a good, exciting story of adventure, appeal. There is many a grown-up boy who finds as much delight as does his sons in the books that are supposed to be suitable only for children. This attraction of adults to books written for boys is quite excusable; in fact, needs no excuse. The closer a man keeps to his boyhood the better it will be for his happiness and his mental and physical health.

"THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON."

Of all the books ever written for boys "The Swiss Family Robinson" is one of the most interesting, and if any doubt may be raised by this assertion the fact of its survival through innumerable editions until to-day should dispel it. There is such a charm about this unfinished anonymous book that keeps it ever fresh, and it is seldom that the boy or adult, who is first introduced to the entrancing adventures of this shipwrecked family, does not turn again to the pages, after he has read the book once, and re-peruse it. In fact, boys are known to have read and re-read it four or five times, and there is on record one who read it no less than eleven times, and then probably hungered for a twelfth. The latest edition of this perennially fresh story is that published by Messrs. J. M. Dent and Co. In this edition the print is clear, the paper of stout texture, and above all the illustrations, of which there are about two score, a dozen of them in colours, well suited both to the text and the reader. In choosing a present for a boy or girl, much worse can be done than the purchase of this handsome volume.

"A MIDDY OF THE SLAVE SQUADRON."

"A Middy of the Slave Squadron" is, as its name denotes, a story of the suppression of the slave trade. The scene is the West African seas, and the period the first quarter of last century. The hero Dick Fortescue's adventures are not confined to the sea. Falling into the hands of the villain, the slave trader, he is put ashore among the savages, and a considerable portion of the book is devoted to a recital of his adventures among the West African natives, and to his escape from them. Boys who know Mr. Collingwood's former stories will welcome this, the latest of his output.

"THE GREAT AEROPLANE."

In "The Great Aeroplane," the basis, as it were, of the story is one which, outside of Jules Verne and H. G. Wells, would have been inconceivable less than a decade ago. The Great Aeroplane is a far more perfect machine than any which exists as yet, but this story deals with the future rather than the present, and it is permissible to foresee the possibility of very great developments in the newly-discovered science of flying. As is to be expected in a book intended for boys, the hero is of the proper stuff, and so are his adventures, which are numerous and exciting. Boys with a scientific bent in particular will enjoy this book and feel grateful to its author, Captain Brereton.

The Invisible Island. By ALEXANDER MACDONALD. (Blackie and Son. 5s.)

On Foreign Service. By Staff-Surgeon T. T. JEANS, R.N. (Blackie and Son. 6s.)

For Rupert and the King. By HERBERT HAYENS. (S.P.C.K. 3s. 6d.)

"THE Invisible Island" is a very sound story of gold-prospecting, Chinamen, Australian aborigines, and nefarious piratical gentry. Mr. Macdonald is somewhat too fond of the humorous miner, in the manner of Bret Harte, and he frequently delays the proper business of his story while he allows his characters to indulge in long exchanges of facetious verbosity. Nevertheless, "The Invisible Island" is a first-rate boys' book. There is a true romantic savour about the mist-enshrouded island in the Gulf of Carpentaria, by way of which numbers of Chinese are supposed to be smuggled into the interior of Australia. The inscrutable Celestial is always a ready means of suggesting mystery and dark adventure, and Mr. Macdonald knows how to make the most of him.

"ON FOREIGN SERVICE."

Staff-Surgeon Jeans has, we learn from various printed slips inserted by the publishers in his last book, been hailed in some quarters as a modern Marryat. It is a favourite trick of some reviewers to hail everyone whose work is at all interesting as reminiscent of some worthy of the past. We, at any rate, think Staff-Surgeon Jeans has a long way to go before he will be a Marryat. He is certainly clever, but we wish he would find some less irritating way of showing his cleverness than by larding his pages with fourth-form slang. "On Foreign Service" is a tale of two British cruisers and a Spanish-American revolution, and it is supposed to be told by three naval officers, among whom the chapters are unevenly distributed. We do not question Staff-Surgeon Jeans's knowledge of the conversation of naval officers, but, if it is as slangy as he makes out, we would point out that not everything that is said may be written. Such a phrase as "nothing to do with us rolling and pitching. Rather not!" is very bad writing even in a tale told by a light-hearted sub-lieutenant; and it is not a good thing for the youthful mind of England to be fed with sentences like "took a good deal of 'rousting' out before they'd do their job." These quotations are from the same page, and neither is from between inverted commas. They could be paralleled from almost every paragraph in the book. Now and then, in describing some scene of rapid action, the author warms to his work and lapses temporarily into literary English. On these all too few occasions he shows how well he can write when he pleases. For the rest, the story is fresh and entertaining. The complexity of life on a modern warship is skilfully suggested; the handling of the revolution, a well-worn subject, is very neat; and there are numberless clever touches of detail throughout the book. We are a little curious as to why the colours of the revolutionary flag in the frontispiece and elsewhere do not agree with the text.

"FOR RUPERT AND THE KING."

Mr. Hayens writes very good Henty and very good English as well. The manner of his tale is irreproachable. As for the matter of it, "For Rupert and the King" is a boys' book, and it is proper that the "grown-up" should handle it delicately. The story of Cavalier and Roundhead is an old story, and Mr. Hayens tells it in the old way, but the young reader does not as a rule trouble his head about originality. No doubt he will learn with entire satisfaction how the spirited Sir Ralph Clifton, aged seventeen, leaves his ancestral halls to join Rupert's army; and how he takes such a gallant part in the battle of Marston Moor that before he has been a week with the colours he is entrusted with a mission "which narrowly concerns the whole kingdom." The mission proves difficult of execution, as was to be expected,

and there ensue many complications, to the length of 384 vigorous pages. All the familiar trappings of the gallant tale are here, and all are set forth in the best manner. The coloured illustrations of Mr. Adolph Thiede are well-meaning, if a trifle poster-like in effect.

Indian and Scout. By CAPTAIN F. S. BRERETON. Illustrated. (Blackie and Son. 5s. net.)

IN this spirited tale of adventure, which deals with the days of the Californian gold rush, Captain Brereton more than supports the reputation he has gained as a writer for boys. From the first to the last chapter the interest never once flags, so skilful is the author in the vigorous portrayal of events about which boys delight to read. Here, indeed, they will revel amidst thrilling drama, where the evil designs of train robbers and the more terrible designs of red-skins are met with that fine and manly courage which appeals to all healthy-minded youth. Jack Kingsley, the hero, is a lad of whom any mother might be proud, and the author is to be congratulated for discovering a model so completely consistent with those high and ennobling qualities which are characteristic of a true British spirit.

The O'Shaughnessy Girls. By ROSA MULHOLLAND (Lady Gilbert). Illustrated in Colour by G. Demain Hammond, R.I. (Blackie and Son. 6s. net.)

IN the above-mentioned book Lady Gilbert has given us a very charming and amusing story. Although she is somewhat inclined to dwell a little on the Irish lineage and blue-blooded ancestry of her four O'Shaughnessy maidens, the interest is well sustained, and their adventures realistically and humorously depicted. The two elder O'Shaughnessy's do not form the centre of attraction; they are both beautiful and married to English peers of the realm, and thus are useful chaperones to their two younger sisters, Bluebell and Lavender. Bluebell runs away to go on the stage, whilst Lavender stays at home with her mother, Lady Sybil, and the exciting adventures of Bell and the quiet, busy life of Lavender supply pleasant reading; whilst romantic desires are amply gratified by the young O'Clare, who finally marries Lavender, and also by Cyprian, the lover of Bell. Some of the best bits in the book lie in the glimpses of Irish country-folk Lady Gilbert grants us, and which reveal her deep insight into the Celtic character.

The story reaches its desired consummation in a happy ending to the sound of wedding bells, and is prettily illustrated by Mr. Demain Hammond.

A New England Maid. By ELIZA F. POLLARD. Illustrated. (Blackie and Son. 3s. 6d.)

"A NEW ENGLAND MAID" is a story of the American War of Independence, written round the family of the traitor Benedict Arnold. The portrayal of Arnold's sister, Hannah, however, is almost too good to be true; her piety and placidity at seventeen years of age are so phenomenal that she fails to interest us. Phenomenal, too, is her Cassandra-like prevision of the future dangers menacing her brother and the ill-fated Major André, whose moving story is told by Miss Pollard very sympathetically. Arnold, who considered himself injuriously treated by his colleagues, makes a proposition to sell the important fortress of West Point, on the Hudson River, to the English. André, the go-between is caught on American soil and hanged as a spy, and Hannah's journey to save him is a fruitless one. Though Miss Pollard does not weary the young reader "with State reasons and all the dry political history of the past, fascinating as it may be to their elders," the main facts of the campaign, the main outlines of this interesting period, are adequately presented.

Two Schoolgirls of Florence. By MAY BALDWIN. With Eight Coloured Illustrations by H. C. EARNSHAW. (W. and R. Chambers. 5s.)

THIS story of school-life in Florence is written of Florence of to-day, and is the account of two English girls who are sent for the winter to Italy to learn what Italy can teach them. They are both impressed by their stay, and the moral is that "it is very difficult to understand other nations." The contrasting national characteristics and a lively account of national and school festas give an interest to the book, which is written with genuine knowledge of school-life.

The Princess and the Goblin. By GEORGE MACDONALD. With Illustrations in Colour and Black-and-White. (Blackie and Son. 3s. 6d. net.)

THIS re-issue of George Macdonald's fantastic story, with its new coloured illustrations and its familiar wood-cuts, makes a delightful gift-book for a child. Though George Macdonald's stories were written in the sixties and seventies, they have not lost their hold upon children of to-day, who still read his "Phantastes" and "At the Back of the North Wind" with greater pleasure than the works of later and more sophisticated story-tellers.

The Wonder Book. A Picture Annual for Boys and Girls. (Ward, Lock, and Co. 3s. 6d.)

Blackie's Children's Annual. Stories and Verses Illustrated. (Blackie and Sons. 3s. 6d.)

The Complete Story of Old Mother Hubbard. By LADBROKE BLACK. Illustrated by DUDLEY TENNANT. (Duckworth and Co. 3s. 6d. net.)

Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales. Illustrated by HELEN STRATTON. (Blackie and Son. 1s.)

Our Happy Home Book. Stories and pictures. (Blackie and Son. 1s. 6d.)

Holiday Pictures and Stories. (Blackie and Son. 1s. 6d.)

Play-Hour Picture Stories. (Blackie and Son. 1s. 6d.)

Busy Little People All the World Over. Written by WALTER COOK. Illustrated by ALICE M. COOK. (Blackie and Son. 3s. 6d.)

The Round-About Book. (Blackie and Son. 1s.)

ACCORDING to the calculation of many people who make a speciality of child study, the second division in the life of a child takes place between the ages of seven and fourteen. From the early stages of "make believe" the little ones gradually advance, until the time arrives when they want to know "really and truly," and it is in order to supply such a demand as this that books similar to "The Wonder Book" and "Blackie's Children's Annual" go the usual Christmas round. The latter volume, consisting of short stories, verse and pictures, is similar to and neither better nor worse than previous editions issued by the same firm. Messrs. Ward, Lock, and Co.'s book, however, tells quite a different story. Mr. Harry Golding, the editor, has evidently taken great pains to make it as varied and as interesting as possible. There are 264 pages, dealing with a wide range of subjects, Miss Agnes Grozier Herbertson contributing "The Land of Do-As-You-Like" and other equally interesting little glimpses into imaginary lands, including "The Adventures of Whiskers Rat-Tail," "Our Summer Holiday," to say nothing of several pleasant little sets of verse over the signature "E. A. M."—which signature, by the way, seems somewhat familiar to us. Some quaint illustrations by Dudley Tennant embellish "Old Mother Hubbard," and another old favourite is with us in a selection of "Hans Andersen's Fairy Tales," illustrated by Helen Stratton. The remainder of the wares in our basket of merchandise are all bright and entertaining, and worthy of the publisher's established reputation.

PRESENTS FOR TINY TOTS

Dean's Real Life Series: No. 6, *Children's Pets*; No. 7, *Pussies and Bow-Wows*; No. 8, *The Home Farm*; No. 9, *Round the Zoo*. Printed in Colour. (Dean and Son. 1s. each.)

The Story of Mother Goose, also of her Son Jack, and of the Goose that laid the Golden Egg. Illustrated by FRANK ADAMS. (Blackie and Son. 2s.)

The History of Sam the Sportsman (From an Old Chap Book). Pictured by FRANK ADAMS. (Blackie and Son. 2s.)

The Story of Flip and Fuzzy: A Picture-Book for Little Folk. Drawings by ANGUSINE MACGREGOR. Rhymes by JESSIE POPE. (Blackie and Son. 1s. 6d.)

Baby Ballads. Rhymes and Drawings by RUTH COBB. (Blackie and Son. 1s. 6d.)

More Jumbo Stories. Pictures and Verses for Little Folk. Illustrated by HARRY B. NEILSON. (Blackie and Son. 1s.)

How they Came Home from School. By S. ROSAMOND PRAEGER. Illustrated in Colour. (Blackie and Son. 2s. 6d.)

A Child's Rhyme Book. By PATRICIA WENTWORTH. Illustrated by GRACE H. MORGAN. (Andrew Melrose. 2s. net.)

YEAR by year it is increasingly difficult for those who cater for children's toy-books to invent anything that is at all new in the way of illustrations. The portrayal of cats, dogs, horses, and wild animals is always of interest to the young, and in each of the books before us we are given twelve reproductions of all kinds of favourites. "Children's Pets," "Pussies and Bow-Wows," "The Home Farm," and "Round the Zoo" are evidently intended for quite small children, as, with the exception of a few words of description on each page, there is no letterpress at all. The pictures are large and bright, but we do not think that we can compliment Messrs. Dean on any artistic effect achieved, while we fear that the person responsible for the colouring of the pictures must now find that his stock of green paint is extremely low.

From Messrs. Blackie and Son we have received the usual large and varied assortment of books suitable for children of all ages. "The Story of Mother Goose," illustrated with very bright and pretty pictures by Frank Adams, has the advantage of possessing double leaves, a system very much to be commended when little, careless hands have the turning over of the pages. The familiar old story is told in rhyme, as is also that of "Sam the Sportsman," which is another double-leaved book suitable for the proverbial small boy. Our old friend the golliwog is again with us in "Flip and Fuzzy," a book of pictures and rhymes in the "brown" series, while "Baby Ballads," of the same series, appears to be devoted to all sorts of things except babies. "More Jumbo Stories," with pictures by Harry B. Neilson, is a good shillingsworth for a youngster of a sporting turn of mind. We do not think that we can compliment S. Rosamond Praeger upon the tale she tells the little ones in "How they Came Home from School." Such remarks as "You might choke the baby; and how do you know it is not giving you measles or something?" and "You look like the monkey in the menagerie trying to catch fleas: let's play monkeys" are calculated neither to interest nor amuse the small child. Quite a different style of book to any of the above is "A Child's Rhyme Book," written by Patricia Wentworth and issued by Mr. Andrew Melrose, and which consists of a dainty little volume fantastically conceived, with several of the verses set to music. It must indeed be a sweet little "missy" who will prefer "A Child's Rhyme Book" to the larger and bolder volumes issued by Messrs. Blackie.

